

South Asia Studies Faculty Review of Proposed California Curriculum Framework

Introduction

The state of California has undertaken a comprehensive review of the K-12 curriculum for the teaching of History and Social Sciences. We want to acknowledge the excellent work done by the educators and teaching specialists in seeking to ensure that California students receive the best education at the highest standards possible. Indeed, in many areas of the curriculum framework that we reviewed, we were quite impressed with the thoughtfulness and care taken to formulate general guidelines for teaching about complex material. As one of the historians on the committee noted, “There is a genuine attempt to move the curriculum in the direction of a global and world history frame. Many of these discussions reflect the guidelines set forth by the American Historical Association. I am heartened to learn that my first year students come with this background and that my M.A. students, many of whom end up in teaching K-12, are going to be taking on these debates and discussions.”

This being said, in the ten years since some of members of this committee evaluated the History and Social Sciences sections of California Textbooks (see Title VI South Asia Textbook Reports submitted to the California Board of Education in 2006), the curriculum framework we reviewed does not reflect engagement with key problems we noted then. Indeed, apparently responding to pressure from Hindu nationalist and community organizations, several deleterious changes have been made to the current version of the framework: 1) the removal of any mention of the historical term Arya/n (which appears in the *Rg Veda*) or the descriptive term “Indo-Aryan” 2) removal of caste and mention of caste discrimination in India, and sanitizing of the nature of the caste-system in general, and 3) removal of the term Dalit. The current framework also seems to contain added material lacking scientific or scholarly validity which seeks 1) to establish Aryans as indigenous inhabitants of South Asia or to cast doubt on the accepted scholarly consensus that Aryans migrated into South Asia, and 2) to establish the Indus Valley Civilization as congruent or contiguous with Vedic culture with selective references to the IVC river system.

The larger issue is that the term “Hindu,” originally drawn from the Persian *Hind* and Arabic *al-Hind* to describe all members of the geographic region living beyond the Indus River, may not have acquired an organized religious dimension until perhaps the 13th century (and not commonly until much later). This raises the question of whether Hinduism is the appropriate template for discussing ancient South Asia, a problem we noted in the 2006 report. In holding that Hinduism (and by extension, the Vedas, and Sanskrit) provides the definitive template for teaching about ancient South Asia, students may be disadvantaged from a more scientific approach to understanding the IVC, diverted from learning more about other classical traditions, such as the Tamil one, or from productively connecting the Aryan peoples to Central Asian societies (for example, by comparing the *Rg Veda* to the *Avesta* of the Zoroastrians). In any textbook treating India’s past or present, Hinduism will of course, have a large part. But the

presence of Hinduism historically has expanded greatly in the framework, while other religions are given inadequate space, and there needs to be better discussion of the rich post-Vedic diversity of Hindu practices, traditions, and social reform movements.

Broad Concerns

An important issue is to provide accurate information about South Asian civilization that is not demeaning to any group of students or to the communities from which they come or that exposes students to ridicule or bullying. A second is how to respond to pressures from groups and individuals who wish to advocate for the inclusion of material that is not supported by the current state of research in the various areas of scholarship. Both of these issues are complex and controversial.

One possible way to cope with the first issue is to place South Asian social and religious practice in a broader comparative context. A consistent and often well-justified complaint is that South Asian civilization is singled out for criticism or negative portrayal on the basis of its particular historical forms of social organization. This is where the question of the representation of caste, *varna* and social hierarchy in general becomes contentious. This subject should be framed in terms of the fact that all cultures and civilizations known to history, including those of the West, have regimes of social hierarchy based on class, ethnicity, race, religion, or occupation. So it is not that South Asia is in some way a backward outlier among human civilizations that uniquely instantiates the subordination or marginalization of some groups with regard to others but that it has, from antiquity theorized, organized, naturalized and textualized its particular schemes of doing this. Critics of the India content of history textbooks in 2006 argued that a harshly critical description of caste made students of South Asian heritage feel shame; and one would clearly want to avoid this. On the other hand, presenting caste as entirely benign harms those of South Asian heritage like Dalits who are of castes deemed “untouchable” by elites, and it deprives students of necessary tools for critical thinking about social problems by pretending there are none.

It is important to strike some balance between representing South Asian social organization as a specific form of social order that may also be oppressive to minority communities and, as some of the community input would have it, as a benign way of arranging society harmoniously so that each group can function happily in its assigned role. In no way can we dissociate these phenomena from an ancient and persistent determination of caste and class by birth and thus agree that assignment to social groups was simply a matter of occupation or mere choice.

On the connected issues of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) and the Aryan migration (often mistaken for the “Aryan Invasion Theory”) we can only go with the best current, scientific, and scholarly consensus. Based on the available linguistic, archeological, and population genetics information available to us, the great majority of academic researchers on early South Asia understand that the IVC was distinct from that of the Vedic Civilization although later South Asia cultures do show some thought provoking affinities in material culture with the IVC. While we must acknowledge that there is a very great deal that we do not know about the culture,

language, religion and general civilization of the IVC, there is nothing to suggest that the Vedic Civilization was a continuation of it.

It is certainly true, as has been long recognized, that many early propounders of what has come to be called the AIT (especially its 19th century version) had religious, ethnic, political and other biases that supported their views of the hierarchy of civilizations and of a fierce, Indo-European speaking, nomadic warrior culture invading and destroying a sedentary and defenseless agricultural and urban civilization. But it is indefensible and wrong to ascribe these outdated biases or sinister “Orientalist” motives to contemporary scholars of South Asia. In fact, no one actually believes any more in the “invasion” part of the AIT as it has long since been shown that the urban civilization of the IVC declined well before the advent of Indo-European speaking, self-described Aryans in the subcontinent and that earlier civilization did not succumb to any sort of wholesale military conquest. Ironically, it is actually those who accuse modern scholarship of 19th century missionary and colonial attitudes, who perpetuate that outdated theory. Indeed, we are dismayed at the way in which journalistic or unvetted scholarship is used to grind particular axes, and at how credible scholarship is either dismissed or misused to drive particular agendas. As for the counter argument for the theory of “Aryan indigeneity,” there is simply nothing discernable by any branch of contemporary scholarship to support it, and the data from population genetics is inconclusive, with most geneticists agreeing that the current state of the field cannot settle the matter either way (see Appendix 1). These issues require interdisciplinary knowledge across pre-modern and modern South Asian history, linguistics, Sanskrit and Vedic Studies, Hinduism Studies, Islamic Studies, Sikh Studies, Dalit Studies, Ethnic Studies, Religious Studies, anthropology, archeology, population genetics and the physical sciences such as geology and climatology, and cannot be assessed simply by citing random sources from one or two fields.

We turn now to the particular sections of the framework we reviewed.

Grade 6 – The Early Civilizations of India pp. 209-221

Summary

The name of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), is also called the Indus Civilization or Harappan Civilization. The insistence in this case is to change or amplify the name in order to include the Sarasvati River. There is no archeological reason for this, and J. Mark Kenoyer –an archeologist that has worked extensively on the IVC- refers to this attempt as the result of a misconception. The proposed name change is associated with Hindu nationalist attempts to connect the IVC with Vedic culture. It probably also has to do with the fact that today the Indus River is entirely in Pakistan, an inconvenient fact for nationalists, while the Sarasvati (or what is frequently believed to have been the Sarasvati) flows in modern India. **We recommend changing the Title of this Section to “The Early Civilizations of South Asia.” At several other places in the text, we also recommend substituting South Asia for “Ancient India” or “India” (see pp. 190, 192, 198-200, 208-210, 230)**

With respect to the migration into South Asia of the Vedic peoples, one document we saw quotes Kenoyer, saying that he considered such a migration to be “absurd.” However, what he meant

was an arrival that was accompanied by the violent destruction of cities. In more recent work, Kenoyer accepts a gradual migration that does not imply such a destruction. This is precisely the current view of linguists and Vedicists (see Appendix 2). Kenoyer also considers the archeological record of the Painted Grey Ware culture (1200-800 BCE) and the Northern Black Polished Ware culture (700- 300 BCE) to be convincing for correlating it to Vedic culture. This is, again, consistent with the view of linguists and Vedicists.

Mentions of caste are one of the most important things that some organizations want to change by diminishing its importance and portraying it incorrectly. As far as varna (social class) is concerned, it is both political and religious. There could be a reference to the fact that the system of the four social classes, the varnas, appears already in the oldest Sanskrit text, The *Rg Veda*, as part of a description of how the world and the social order were created. So according to the *Rg Veda*, the varna system is inherent in the world. The hymn of the *Rg Veda* in which the varnas are described has been used, even in modern times, to give religious sanctity to the system because the Vedas are considered to be revealed texts. The concept of a hierarchical society is in place from the times of the Rigveda. A good example of the importance of varna to brahmins of the time of the composition of the *Mahabharata* is the fact that when the "end of the world," yuganta, is described in the *Mahabharata*, one of the worst consequences of the decay brought about by this end is varnasamkara, the intermingling of varnas, meaning, especially, that brahmins behave like sudras and vice-versa.

The section opens with these four guiding questions:

1. How did the environment influence the emergence and decline of the Harappa civilization?
2. How did the religion of Hinduism support individuals, rulers, and societies?
3. How did the religion of Buddhism support individuals, rulers, and societies?
4. During the Harappa civilization, the Vedic period, and the Maurya Empire, how did the connections between India and other regions of Afroeurasia increase?

1. How did the environment influence the emergence and decline of the Harappa civilization?
pp. 209-11.

We recommend changing "Harappa Civilization" to "Indus Valley Civilization" to conform to the usage of scholars, for whom the Indus Valley denotes the *civilization*, and Harappa denotes a *culture* (particular style of pottery and other artifacts). [NB: This change will also strengthen the linkage between the civilization and its environment, which is the theme, and its parallel with the China section, both of them emphasizing river valleys. Discussion of landscape and monsoon is excellent. We recommend some explicit linking statement that expands upon the "rich soil" idea, to the effect that the soil is favorable to the beginnings of *agriculture* and formation of *farming* villages, again parallel with the China section].

We also recommend dropping reference to the Saraswati/Sarasvati River at p. 209 where it is superfluous and on p. 210 where there is no geoarcheological evidence to support the claim (see Appendix 3). Mention of this one tributary of the Ghaggar-Hakra River (and not others) is grist

for a small group of scholars, who hold, against available evidence that peoples of the Indus Valley Civilization spoke Sanskrit and that the Rg Veda coincides with, or even predates the IVC.

We recommend changing “Ganges” to “Ganga” (p. 210), which is the preferred naming in India currently, and which schoolchildren today will be encountering in the future. We recommend avoiding ambiguity by calling it “India’s other great river system” or “the other of India’s two great river systems” instead of “India’s second great river system”, as if it were secondary to the Indus River system.

p. 210, Lines 802-804: We recommend changing the following sentence since there is no clear linkage of Hinduism to IVC: Some of the statues and figurines show features that are all present in modern Hinduism, such as a male figure that resembles the Hindu God Shiva in meditating posture.

Replace with:

“Although not much is known about the religious practices and beliefs of the Indus Valley civilization, some form of mother goddess may have been worshipped.”

p. 210, Line 808: We recommend deleting “deforestation” from the sentence below, as there is no evidence for this:

Evidence reveals active commerce between the cities of the Harappan civilization as well as foreign trade with Mesopotamia by sea. The Harappan civilization steadily declined after 1900 BCE, perhaps owing to ecological factors such as seismic events, **deforestation**, salt buildup in the soil, and persistent drought.

2. How did the religion of Hinduism support individuals, rulers, and societies? pp. 211-14.

Later in the Vedic period, new commercial towns arose along the Ganges, India’s second great river system. In this era, Vedic culture (or Brahmanism in the existing standards) emerged as a belief system that combined the beliefs of Indic speakers with those of older populations. Teachers focus students on the question: How did the religion of **Hinduism** support individuals, rulers, and societies? Brahmins, that is, priestly families, assumed authority over complex devotional rituals, **but many important sages, such as Valmiki and Vyasa, were not Brahmins.** (p. 211)

There is a shift here from Vedic culture Brahmanism to Hinduism that is unwarranted in this passage. It is important to note that Vedic and non-Vedic traditions are as a part of the larger Indic tradition and not just Hinduism. We recommend deleting “Hinduism” from this passage, and substituting the word “Vedas” so that the question reads, “How did the religion of the Vedas...” We recommend deleting “but many important sages such as Valmiki and Vyasa, were not Brahmins” since this information is incorrect (both were Brahmins).

We recommend changing “Telagu” to “Telegu” pg. 211, line 819

p. 211 There is a problem in taking ancient South Asia to be coterminous with the Vedas, with Sanskrit, and with Hinduism. This excludes the great corpus of Sanskrit literary, scientific, philosophical and inscriptional texts and the entire Sangam tradition of Tamil literature, which again cannot be reduced to Hinduism. We recommend changing this sentence, “Indian history then entered the Vedic period (ca. 1500-500 BCE), an era named for the *Vedas*, Sanskrit religious texts passed on for generations through a complex oral tradition.

Replace with:

“Ancient South Asia experienced a Vedic period (ca. 1500-500 BCE), named for the *Vedas* which were composed in Sanskrit. While Sanskrit texts, both religious and secular, continued to be produced in subsequent centuries, texts in Old Tamil also began to appear around 300 BCE, and Tamil literary production flourished during the Sangam period in South India. (ca. 300BCE-300 CE). Sanskrit **and** Tamil texts passed on for generations through a complex oral tradition.

This sentence is inaccurate, “Vedic teachings gradually built up a rich body of spiritual and moral teachings that formed **the** foundation of Hinduism as it is practiced today” and recommend it be changed to “Vedic teachings gradually built up a rich body of spiritual and moral teachings that form a **key** foundation of Hinduism as it is practiced today.”

p. 211 “The Hindu tradition is thus monistic, the idea of reality being a unitary whole.”

This is a broad generalization that is not applicable to many practices and beliefs regarded as part of Hinduism; it privileges certain advaita beliefs. The issue requires more clarification, but we suggest not making changes at the moment

This sentence is inaccurate and misleading: “Many of the central practices of Hinduism today, including home and temple worship, yoga and meditation, rites of passage (samskaras), festivals, pilgrimage, respect for saints and gurus, **and, above all, a profound acceptance of religious diversity, developed over this period.**”

There are clear differences between Vedism and what is generally referred to as Hinduism, contrary to the statement that the major components of Hinduism are “...easily discernible in the Vedic period...” We recommend deleting a “profound acceptance for religious diversity” from the above sentence as there was much internal conflict and persecution during the Vedic Period which lead to the emergence of Jainism and Buddhism.

pg. 213: line 857—We recommend changing “A person belonged to a particular Varna by his professional excellence and his good conduct, not by birth itself” to “A person belonged to a particular varna not just by his professional excellence and his good conduct, **but mainly by birth.**”

The ideal of caste included the idea that professional excellence and good conduct situated a member in that caste, but not necessarily in practice. At the core of varna ideology and its representation in the Hindu religious texts is the idea of the four orders and the birth of a person into one of the orders. Because the varna order is based on the notion of “by birth,” it guarantees

the superiority of the Brahmin. A Shudra or a Vaisya cannot be a Brahmin. This principle, birth into a varna, also guarantees notions of ritual purity and impurity.

Pg. 213: line 874-876—We recommend adding the part in italics to the end of the sentence, Today many Hindus, in India and in the United States, do not identify themselves explicitly as belonging to a caste, ***but may do so implicitly.***”

Pg. 214: line 883-4---“fewer property rights than men.” We recommend changing *fewer* to *little* property rights when compared with men, akin to the other ancient kingdoms and societies.

p. 214, line 874: eliminate end of sentence “which can make the “caste” label offensive.” This is irrelevant, and is not necessary for the meaning of the sentence.

p. 214, line 892: change “the correct moral decision” to “important moral decisions” The moral quandaries of the Ramayana continue to be debated among Hindus in various versions of the Ramayana

Pg. 214: line 893---Other versions of the Ramayana may include a more nuanced, critical evaluation of Rama’s roles, and it may be helpful to introduce students to the different versions of the Ramayana.

Pg. 214 line 901- We recommend deleting “Hindu background” from this sentence, “Through the story of his life, his **Hindu background**, and his search for enlightenment, students may learn about his fundamental ideas: suffering, compassion, and mindfulness.” The Buddha was a member of the Sakya clan; nothing called Hinduism existed at this moment in time

Pg. 214 We recommend changing this sentence so that it does not appear as if Buddhism completely disappeared in India and was replaced by Hinduism,

“Buddhism waned in India in the late first millennium CE as the result of a resurgence of Hindu tradition”

Replace with, “Although Buddhism waned in the Indian subcontinent in the late first millennium CE as the result of a resurgence of Hindu tradition, vibrant Buddhist communities still thrive in India, Nepal, and Bhutan.”

p. 215 line 905, In the sentence, “Buddhist monks, nuns, and merchants, **however**, carried their religion to Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Central Asia, China, and Southeast Asia” we recommend replacing “however,” with “also.”

3. How did the religion of Buddhism support individuals, rulers, and societies? pp. 214-15.

We recommend addition of an opening sentence for this section, something like this: “At the end of the Vedic period, about the sixth century BCE, there arose many who renounced family life and became wandering teachers of new philosophies of life. Two of the most successful were Siddhartha Gautama, called the Buddha (“the awakened one”) and the Mahavira (“the great

hero’’). The religions they taught are Buddhism and Jainism. Buddhism spread very widely beyond South Asia, throughout Central, East and Southeast Asia.

The characterization of the teachings of these two religions is extremely brief.

We recommend adding something like this: Buddhism teaches that the path to liberation from the wheel of death and rebirth is through the suppression of selfish desires. It teaches that the world is impermanent, that the self is an illusion, and that suffering is rooted in the false belief in the self.

We recommend for Jainism something like this: “Jainism promoted the idea of *ahimsa* (non-violence to all life), which was taken up by Buddhists and Hindus, especially in the form of vegetarianism.

4. During the Harappa civilization, the Vedic period, and the Maurya Empire, how did the connections between India and other regions of Afroeurasia increase? p.215

This is the shortest and least developed section, and it does not respond to the various parts of the question.

We recommend at least one sentence be written devoted to each of the three subjects: the Indus Valley (not Harappa) civilization, the Vedic period, and the Maurya Empire, giving examples of how each was connected with regions outside India.

We recommend changing the sentence on Chandragupta Maurya to, “A period of prolonged military struggle between the republics and kingdoms of North India culminated in the victory of Chandragupta Maurya and the first unification of India in 321 BCE, comparable to the Warring States period in China and its first unification under the Qin slightly later.”

Grade 7 – World History and Geography, Medieval and Modern Times

Summary

The brevity of the content on the coming of Islam to parts of the Indian subcontinent precludes any meaningful discussion of its uneven and varied aspects both in terms of geography and chronology.

First, timelines. The fact that early Arab conquests in Sind in the 8th century led to the Arab Kingdoms along the Indus (Multan and Mansura), that the Turkish Ghaznavids broke away from the Iranian Samanid Kingdom and began raiding the Indian frontier and later interior (Mahmud) almost 200 years later, and the Mamluks in Delhi began controlling north India not until the 12th century, is often overlooked.

Second, the curriculum framework should find a way to mention the pathways through which Islam might have spread other than by force/persuasion: 1. through trade and littoral contacts on the route to Hajj along the Gujarat-Sind shorelines 2. through heterodox groups especially Ismaili Shias, and 3. through Sufi lineages in Punjab and Bengal.

It is imperative that we dissociate to some degree the spread of Islam from Turkish and Afghan military conquests and remind students that Islam spread to specific parts of the Indian subcontinent through steppe and frontier groups far away in space and time from the core areas of the Arabian Peninsula, the Mediterranean, Spain, and Iran where the early expansion of Islamic empires took place after the creation of the early caliphate.

“Southwestern Asia, 300-1200: Persia and the World of Islam” pp. 252-62

The sections on Islam are generally good, but a finer analysis of the language and some details suggests that the reader may be led to some incorrect and problematic conclusions. For example, Islamic salvation theory is complicated and the idea that those who deny "Allah" will suffer damnation does not tally with it. For example, believers, including monotheistic Jews and Christians, will "have their reward with their Lord" (so in the Qur'an). This idea of damnation and conflict with others seems to be highlighted also in the way conquest and conversion are treated, yet conversion in early Islam was actually rare. The countryside continued to be dominated by non-Muslims and the administration of the empire relied on tax levies from them individually and on the land tax in order to be viable. Such tax systems were often continuations of the practices of earlier empires (Sassanid and Byzantine), with modifications. We are also uncomfortable with the expression "war with other cultures". Muslim conquests were certainly driven in part by religious zeal in a highly charged atmosphere of apocalyptic expectations that gripped Middle Eastern (including Jewish and Christian) communities. But they require further explanations of political, economic, and population pressures. The Sassanid and Byzantine empires, in conflict for several centuries, had been penetrating the Arabian Peninsula for some time; the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula saw the slow growth of other kingdoms that were proxy to these empires. In addition, Arab tribes continued to raid sedentary populations for centuries. It is in this much larger context that Muslim conquests and expansion need also to be understood. One should certainly not downplay the impact of Islam on these conquests--they are certainly Muslim conquests--but one should also not use the expression "inspired by that religion, [they] fought wars against other cultures". We recommend that the details about Islam be presented through the lens of its specific context, i.e., in terms of continuity and change. Otherwise, the religion appears to be not a Late Antique phenomenon that makes sense in milieu, but an alien moment in history that inspires people to wage war with others.

“South Asia, 300-1200” pp. 263-66

This section presents Hinduism and Buddhism as being inherent in India and Islam coming from the outside. This is the familiar way of dehistoricizing the “Indian religions” and externalizing Islam to anywhere but the Arabian Peninsula. Of course, the comment on Islam is a very brief one at the very end since the period is 300-1200. And it is interesting that algebra is used as a way to connect India to Persia and the larger entity that is being called the Islamic world. Perhaps the period 300-1200 in South Asia can be framed as that of religious evolution and mixture all around in which Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam play significant parts at various points in time based on geographical region and the political situation within India. That would disassociate Islam from being political regime first and religion later, and, inversely, highlight the historicity and political contexts of the Hindu-Buddhist developments as well. It is unclear

whether this can be accomplished in the context of the existing narrative. But conceptually, it would be an advancement over the usual narrative of Indian history generated in the colonial period that has been challenged vigorously by specialized scholarship but has not percolated down to lower levels. The basic issue is that when Islam is presented in this way, it ends up configuring Muslims as aliens in India no matter how many centuries have passed or how they understand their own identities.

In the (preceding) Persia and World of Islam section, the framework creates a sense for the complexity by having Baghdad, Sicily, and Cairo in different periods as case studies for interactions between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. This allows us to talk about political power being in the hands of one or the other but cultural life being complex. Perhaps doing the same kind of thing for India 300-1200 would do the work of indicating the internal diversity of the region and also show the complexity regarding the question of interactions away from a solely political or religious focus. Sites could be in the northwest, northeast, and the south, which would require different permutations between Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, showing also the fact that the evolution of all three can be interdependent based on time period and location. This also allows for creating interesting interactive assignments that provide a sense for the density of cultural possibilities in the same way the framework has done for the Baghdad-Sicily-Cairo circuit. Emphasizing particular points from within Gupta, Chola, and Ghurid/Ghaznavid contexts already emphasized in the framework may be what is needed.

Pg. 262, lines 709-10-We recommend deleting this sentence, “Even though India was not unified into one state, nor did its people belong to a single religion, the entire area was developing a cultural unity.”

There was neither territorial, cultural, nor linguistic unity in South Asia at this time; Hinduism at this moment would have played little role in such a process in any case.

Pg. 264: lines 703-4-We recommend deleting this part of the sentence, “who had three aspects: Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the keeper, and Siva, the destroyer.” This is inaccurate; much bhakti devotionalism is in fact focused on Ram or Krishna as manifestations of the Lord.

Pg. 264: line 709---We recommend adding a sentence to the following effect: The Bhakti movement also served as a critique of the power held by priestly elites.

p. 265 Replace “India” on lines 729 and 731 with “South Asia.”

“The Impact of Ideas, 1500-1750” pp. 305-7

The section on the “Impact of Ideas 1500-1750” is the least integrated or worked out in the direction of a world historical framework. This may be more a state of the field as new research is still in early stages. For example, the discussion of humanism is primarily limited to Europe when we are now capable of discussing humanism of different sorts in places like India. Is there a way to read the Mughals/South Asia into a wider and a more generous reading of humanism? To give one quick example, the Mughal emperor Babur’s (d.1530) autobiography is an exemplary

humanistic exercise (predating Shakespeare by several decades), and one written in India. This might offset efforts to force a narrowed down reading of the Mughals. The Baburnama would be an excellent example of an early humanistic endeavor. It is a surprising piece of autobiographical writing that is humanistic by any definition. Stephen Dale calls it an example of "steppe humanism" and Hamid Dabashi discusses it in his "Persian Literary Humanism."

Opening a new front in this debate, it might be possible to bring back the Mughals as intellectually and culturally cosmopolitan (Persian-Sanskrit translations etc.). This section on the 'Impact of Ideas' could ideally do more with how the Ottomans, Safavids and the Mughals also reorganized religious orders in much the same way the Reformation reorganized religion in Europe so that we can see reformation as a broader Eurasian process from Europe to Japan. Some college textbooks already make this move (e.g., 'Worlds Together, Worlds Apart' by scholars at Princeton). The contestations over the Mughals and violence etc. are too limiting and, if at all possible, it might be better to move in other directions.

How did world religions change and spread during the early modern period? pp. 305-7

Pg. 306, Lines 1543-1554 consider substituting this passage:

Around 1520, Nanak (1469-1539), a religious thinker and poet of significant talent acquired a piece of land on the banks of the river Ravi, founded a new town named Kartarpur ("Creator's town") in the region called the Punjab, and presently split between India and Pakistan. There he gathered a group of families that did farming for sustenance. Overtime, this community evolved into a world religion with twenty-five million adherents scattered around the globe. In his compositions, Nanak sang of God who brought the creation into being and oversees its activity with great degree of concern. Nanak expected human beings to be in constant awareness of divine immanence around them, and as a result live a life of personal purity, hard work, and social productivity. As the Sikh community expanded they came into conflict with the Mughal rulers of the time, and this confrontation eventually resulted in the Sikhs establishing their own rule in the Punjab.

Grade Eight – United States History and Geography: Growth and Conflict

Who came to the United States at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century?

p. 364, line 264, Change Hindu and Sikh to "South Asian (mostly Sikh)" in the sentence, "California also came to play an increasingly significant role in the national economy. The Gold Rush in California, the building of the transcontinental railroad, and agricultural labor in Hawaii and the mainland spurred Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, Hindu, and Sikh immigration to the United States."

Grade Nine – Elective Courses in History–Social Science

pp. 436, 443, 444, and 447 we recommend changing “India” to South Asia. Most references to India before 1947 should be changed to South Asia.

Survey of World Religions

p. 401. Islam is missing in the list. With a small community of Zoroastrians in LA, perhaps there should be a mention of Zoroastrianism too.

The Humanities pp. 403-5

p. 405

See recommendation on pp. 10-11 of this report. We suggest also that these texts might productively be divided into literary and scriptural texts rather than grouping them all as “classical texts.” The Quran is conspicuous by its absence, and should be added. Perhaps “Sri Guru Granth Sahib” be recorded as the Guru Granth in Lines 456-67.

Grade Ten – World History, Culture, and Geography: The Modern World

The World in 1750 pp.424-7

On p. 424 the framework proposes to discuss the "end of the pre-modern world", without saying anything about what can be reliably construed as a working definition of modernity. Is the criterion based on an assessment of technological progress, economic advancement or proximity to a form of capitalist production? Or is it a contemporary awareness of these or similar criteria? The construction also implies that all the societies in question somehow shared the same historic moment and experience. This kind of account does not take into account the Portuguese and Spanish expansion in parts of the New World, littoral Africa and maritime Asia centuries before, or the rise of mercantile corporations representing national empires (especially, Dutch, French and English), and therefore the uneven chronology of European expansion at the expense of the Asian empires.

P. 425 seems to suggest that something like "divine right" existed in most contemporary empires of the 18th century, including those far away from Europe such as Mughal India or Safavid Iran. Divine right is a very specific example of divinely mandated rule, which in itself is problematic in the context of Mughal India (where the emperor as spiritual guide) or Qing China (heavenly mandate).

Rise of Imperialism and Colonialism pp. 442-453

How did colonization work?

p. 447, lines 533-37: We recommend changing these sentences, “Colonizers introduced new infrastructures, medicines, educational systems, and cultural norms. Print technology and more rapid transportation aided the growth of organized religion. These technological developments also facilitated the transformation of **regional Indian religious traditions into a more unified Hinduism**” to the following:

“Colonizers introduced new infrastructures, medicines, educational systems, cultural norms and reforms. Print technology and more rapid transportation aided the growth of nationalism and organized religion. Such developments also facilitated social reform and the transformation of regional South Asian religious traditions.”

There was no unified Hindu religion at this time (arguably it does not exist now), but colonialism did have an impact on regional social reform movements within Hinduism and Islam.

Lines 452-4: Change “They also attempted to change practices involving marriage and women’s social roles to infuse Western notions of progress into the basic structures of society” to “They also attempted to reform practices involving marriage and women’s social roles.””

Rights, Religion, and Identity pp. 496-8.

On p. 498 we recommend that the sentences, “Anti-Western violence perpetrated by the followers of a fundamentalist version of Islam has contributed to the appearance of deep conflict between the Islamic and Western worlds, especially since 9/11. Students should learn about the roots of modern Islamic extremism by reading a variety of sources from Egyptian writers and the Muslim Brotherhood, for example” be changed to,

“Anti-Western violence has contributed to the appearance of deep conflict between the West and other parts of the world. Students should learn about the roots of modern religious extremism by reading a variety of sources from Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist nationalist texts.”

The sentences imply that anti-Western violence has escalated since 9/11 when there have been ongoing attacks in Europe from the 1970s unrelated to Islamic extremism.

Lines 1469-70: We recommend deleting this sentence, “Historical memories of earlier conflicts, such as the Crusades, have inflamed a contemporary “clash of civilizations.”

The idea of a “clash of civilizations” is an academic one, and while it has gained popular currency, scholars of conflict would not say that historical memories of the Crusades are behind much current conflict. This is an inaccurate and misleading statement that implies that what people think about the Crusades is more responsible for current violence than the recent legacy of US interventions abroad.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Genetic Evidence on Caste and South Asian Migrations

In recent years, genetics has opened up new avenues of understanding genealogical and migration patterns in South Asia. By tracking the inheritance of genetic markers primarily on the Y chromosome and mtDNA, geneticists have produced evidence that at times supports and other times contradicts existing knowledges of South Asian populations from other fields. Since we first evaluated genetic studies for evidence against Aryan migration (see 2006 Title VI Centers Report “Biogenetic Data and Historical Scholarship: Sources of Evidence Regarding Aryan Migration”), the evidence remains unchanged and is inconclusive.

Two articles, “Genetic Evidence of Early Human Migration in the Indian Ocean disproves Aryan Migration/Invasion Theories,” by Lavanya Vemsani and “The origins of Indians: What our genes are telling us” by Srinath Perur claim to “prove” that genetic studies have debunked the Aryan influx theory.

This is far from accurate; indeed almost all genetic studies on Indian samples till date show an extensive mixing of several founder populations (Moorjani, 2013; Reich, 2009), and none of these authors “claim” to have solved the “migration or not” theory.

Vemsani’s article starts with a false premise by stating that in the light of “scant anthropological and linguistic evidence for Aryan migration, genetic studies can be used as scientific evidence”. Genetic studies are generally limited to small subsets and use markers and models that have several limitations. For instance, genetic mixing assumes the mixing of a homogenous population whereas in reality founder groups are rarely homogenous. Thus data from genetic studies cannot “step up” to explain events where archaeological or linguistic evidence are weak or non-existent.

The basis of Vemsani’s claims (that there was no migration) is the Y chromosome genetic marker used in the studies quoted in her article. Delineating the origins of this marker, M17 (R1a) has been mired in some controversy. In general, R1a and R1a1 are believed to have originated somewhere within Eurasia, most likely in the area from Eastern Europe to South Asia. There is suggestion that R1a and R1a1 split within Southern Asia. But this is also not definitive. In fact its origin and dispersal is poorly understood as no marker has yet been described that would distinguish European R1a chromosomes from the South Asian one (Underhill, 2010; Haber, 2012).

The 2013 Perur article is a report on a study by Moorjani et al 2013 and Reich et al. 2009. Reich used samples from 132 Indians across 25 diverse groups, and tried to estimate “founder” groups from which the current population was derived. They found that Indians today are descended from primarily two groups, namely Ancient North Indian (ANI) and Ancient South Indian (ASI), the degree of mixture varying between 40-70%....higher ANI was associated with higher caste groups. Genetically, the ANI are closest to current day Europeans whereas the ASI are closest to Onge (Andamans).

In the 2013 study discussed, Moorjani et al also concluded that the ANI-ASI mixture dates ranging from about 1,900 to 4,200 years ago. In a subset of groups, 100% of the mixture is consistent with having occurred during this period.

Overall both these studies do not prove or disprove any invasion or migration theory. If anything they show the possibility of an influx of a population (ANI). However these are studies with small sample sizes and a more comprehensive analysis with extensive sampling of Indians across regions and castes is needed so that populations with larger cultural and genetic diversities can be compared.

At this time, there is no consensus amongst the different genetic studies, and in fact considerable contradiction remains between them. The much publicized recent work by Reich, Thangaraj et al (2009), and follow up work on this study, remains inconclusive on the Aryan Migration Theory. Current genetic studies do not conclusively refute evidence for the migration of peoples into South Asia. It is especially noteworthy that even in the studies that suggest that there is no evidence for outside migration into South Asia, the “genetic distance of founder event of mixing” is found to be around 4000 years old, a date that approximates theories of Aryan migration into India.

One major point that seems to support the Aryan Migration Theory is that the Ancestral South Indian (ASI) markers are not found outside India, whereas Ancient North Indian (ANI) markers are found throughout central Eurasia. The only way to explain this without assuming an inward ‘Aryan’ migration is to suppose that the ANIs and ASIs resided side-by-side for thousands of years without any intermixing prior to the ANIs migrating outward right at the point when they also started intermixing within India.

What is clear from the various scientific studies is that genetic studies alone are not sufficient to delineate historical events accurately (For example, the controversy surrounding claims of Chengiz Khan’s progeny). Genetic studies depend on objectively classifying “caste” and other populations groups as unique and genealogically pure, claims that have little support amongst the social sciences. Most genetic studies have very small sample sizes to capture both the heterogeneity and large populations of South Asia. Even the much touted Reich, Thangaraj et al (2009) study cautions us:

We warn that ‘models’ in population genetics should be treated with caution. Although they provide an important framework for testing historical hypotheses, they are oversimplifications. For example, the true ancestral populations of India were probably not homogeneous as we assume in our model, but instead were probably formed by clusters of related groups that mixed at different times.

In conclusion, we need complex interdisciplinary analyses to explore the complexities of human migrations using all data and lines of evidence (genetic, linguistic, anthropological, sociological, philosophical, archeological and historical) available to us. DNA analysis alone is not sufficient to overturn scholarly consensus on Indian demographic history.

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Appendix 2

A Linguistic View on South Asian Migrations and the Sarasvati River

Several comments actively dispute or attempt to cast doubt on the standard model of the spread of Indo-European languages into India and the origins of Vedic civilization -- implying that Vedic civilization is a continuation of Harappan civilization and stating that the Vedic people "were indigenous to India," with the corollary that the Old Indo-Aryan language Sanskrit was indigenous as well and that all the Indo-European languages to which it is related came *out of* India. These claims are far outside the mainstream of current scholarship, whose consensus has been arrived at over nearly two centuries of painstaking testing of the foundational hypotheses.

It is claimed that the standard model, found in the proposed language in the textbook, is just "a restatement of the 1848 Aryan invasion theory of F. Max Muller," but fails to acknowledge that this has remained the standard model for the ensuing 1½ centuries, tested again and again against a growing amount of data and with increasingly sophisticated methods. It is further claimed that the model "has never found substantial evidence outside of conclusions from paleo-linguistics," without acknowledging that historical linguistic evidence is in fact the only relevant type of evidence. With the migration model that is the current one, the arrival of a relatively small group of people, whose new technology (horse and chariot warfare, e.g.) allowed them to establish themselves in positions of power but who would have been numerically insignificant compared to the indigenous population, would leave little or no trace in the genetic record, and since these small groups were semi-nomadic pastoralists (judging from their self-presentation in the earliest text, the Rig Veda), they would leave little or no trace in the archaeological record. That Vedic

culture differed so profoundly from Harrapan culture (e.g., no urban centers, indeed no large permanent dwelling places) is another support for the sharp break between Harappan civilization and the Vedic peoples.

Many comments set a very early date for the composition of the Rig Veda (before 2000 BCE), which is far outside the standard views of Vedic scholars. The evidence given is that the Rig Veda mentions the Sarasvatī River, which dried up in the 3rd millennium. There are several points to be made here. 1) Sarasvatī is not necessarily a name, or rather not necessarily the name of a single entity. The word means “(female entity) that possesses pools.” Since the Sanskrit word(s) for river are feminine in gender, the word is used as a river name -- but it can be applied to any river that fits the description (having pools), and in fact Old Iranian has the corresponding term as the designation for a different geographical feature. The Vedic peoples almost surely applied the name to any river they encountered that fit the bill. 2) The Rig Veda is not necessarily a factual atlas, and refers to geographical features often in mythic terms. Once “Sarasvatī” comes to be the name of a mighty river, which is deified and mythologized, any reference to a particular geographical feature may be subsumed under the mythic figure.

The dating proposed in some comments is presumably in service of the implication that Vedic culture continues Harappan culture and that Vedic Sanskrit was an indigenous language. These claims need to be evaluated against this apparent agenda.

Some comments worryingly call not for the suppression of discussion of the standard model but for presentation of “the debate,” or of “both theories.” This is the same tack that has been taken by those who wish to insert “creation science” (CS) into high school biology textbooks -- present evolution as a theory, on a par with CS. But as with evolution vs. CS, there is no real scientific disagreement about the origins of the Indo-Aryans outside of India and their gradual arrival in the subcontinent in early-mid 2nd millennium BCE, and the linguistic evidence is incontrovertible. There are of course disagreements in matters of detail -- as there are in any scientific enterprise -- but these should not be seized on as indications of a lack of fundamental agreement about the way the history unfolded.

Appendix 3

Archeological Evidence on the Sarasvati River

In the curriculum framework, there are references to the Sarasvati River as one of the rivers that provisioned the cities of the Indus civilization. This statement cannot yet be conclusively supported by the geoarchaeological evidence. Some of the impetus for describing an “Indus-Sarasvati Civilization” refers to books by Jane Macintosh, *A Peaceful Realm - The Rise and Fall of the Indus Civilization* (Westview Press, 2002) and Michel Danino *Lost River: On the Trail of the Sarasvati* (Penguin 2010) which are not in keeping with current scholarly consensus or archeological research on the Indus Valley Civilization.

Documentation of the existence of the “Sarasvati River” in the Rg Veda is linguistically challenging for reasons specified in Appendix 2. While some archeologists like J. Mark Kenoyer (2014) use the name Sarasvati interchangeably with the current day Ghaggar River in the Hakra valley of India and Pakistan (thought to be the most likely candidate for the existence of the Sarasvati river), the major claims by proponents of the idea that the existence of the Sarasvati Rivers proves that the Arya authors of the Rg Veda were members of the Indus Valley Civilization are that 1) the Sarasvati River was a “mighty river,” glacially fed and flowing from the Himalayas 2) the Sarasvati River was a major one during the time of Indus Valley civilization and 3) it was the drying of the Sarasvati River that led to the decline of the Indus Valley civilization.

- 1) Recent studies by Maemoku et. al. (2012) show that the flood plains and dune deposits of the Ghaggar-Hakra do not indicate a glacially fed river, but rather a seasonally, monsoon fed river which was much smaller (see also Lawler 2011, Goisan 2012, et. al); isotope data of Ghaggar alluvium also confirms the non-glacial origins of the Ghaggar (Tripathi et. al. 2004).
- 2) Carbon, optical stimulated luminescence (OSL), and zircon U-Pb dating methods suggest the Ghaggar-Hakra originated between 14,000-10,000 BCE and is much older than early Indus Valley civilization at 5,500 BCE or its mature phase from 2600-1900 BCE (Clift et. al.. 2012)
- 3) Some scholars argue that the drying of some channels of the Ghaggar-Hakra occurred well before the advent of Indus Valley civilization (Clift et. al 2012) as also evinced by several Harappan sites in some of the channels of the Ghaggar-Hakra river bed (Maemoku et. al. 2012).

To summarize, it would be best to eliminate discussion of the Sarasvati River, since its possible location or significance during the period of the Indus civilization is not yet well-understood.

The archaeology of the Indus Valley does not document the presence of in-migrating populations to the Indian subcontinent, though genetic analysis of skeletal remains may eventually shed further light on this matter (Kenoyer 2014).

There is no consensus on the relationship between Hinduism and the Indus Valley Civilization, and no direct archeological evidence for it.

Several references are made in the curriculum framework to the culture of the Indus Valley civilization and the Indus River where two of its major settlements are located. These references must be corrected. In one instance it is stated that the Indus River is in India, when in fact, it is in Pakistan. Another reference to Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro locates them in India, when both are in modern-day Pakistan. One way to handle these errors, as in the section when “Mesopotamia, (Syria, Anatolia, and Persia), the Nile Valley of Africa,” and other cultures are referred to, is to add the word, “Pakistan” when India, China, and the lands around the Aegean Sea” are mentioned.

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